

The Ballarat Naturalist

October 2006



Trailing Goodenia
Goodenia lanata
(Club Logo)

INGLEWOOD WEEKEND – FRIDAY 15 TO SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2006

On Friday 15 September 2006 fourteen members travelled to Inglewood with most arriving by about 3.30pm providing time for a visit to Collis and Mavis Needs who fortuitously had agreed to provide assistance in planning and leading the weekend. Collis has lived his whole life in Inglewood and worked casually in the Eucalyptus industry which together with a life long interest in bird observation meant he knew the area exceedingly well. A visit to Fred Watt, a 90 year old long time resident with early involvement in the BOCA was included and he also agreed to assist with the weekend.

Before dusk a visit was made to the botanic gardens, a small area on the edge of town with an adjacent large dam providing a pleasant introduction to the area. Sunlight on a yellow-tufted honeyeater was beautiful.

Saturday commenced at an area of regenerating, harvested blue mallee. We travelled about 1.4 km along Christie Road, just out of Inglewood towards Wedderburn then turned left along an unnamed track and went about 300m. The blue mallee (*Eucalyptus polybractea*) block was on the right and had growth about 1 metre high. Here Collis, who had harvested mallee in his younger days, talked about the harvesting saying that blue mallee is the best with the highest cineol (oil) content. A typical vat load of 3 – 4 ton of leaves would give 100 pounds of oil with the best leaves giving anything up to 200 pounds. Normally mallee could be harvested every two years with quick growth resulting in more oil. Under and around the mallee was a good collection of plants including waxlip orchids (*Glossodia major*), flame heath (*Astroloma conostephiodes*), scarlet mintbush (*Prostanthera aspalathoides*), leopard orchid (*Diuris pardina*), downy grevillea (*Grevillea alpina*), Bendigo wax (*Philotheca verrucosa*), broom baeckea (*Babingtonia behrii*), and golden moths (*Diuris chryseopsis*). Certainly a nice collection of plants considering the apparent monoculture of mallee at first glance. However, the most excitement here was generated when Genny Binns flushed a pair of spotted night-jars as these rare birds are almost invisible on a nest and will only move if almost trodden on.

Collis and Mavis next led us back and across the Wedderburn Road along the Old Inglewood-Kingower Road and right into Bacon Road. Here we stopped at a sec-

tion of mallee that had been very recently harvested. All the leaves had been stripped leaving just bare sticks and few other plants could be seen but it was interesting to see recent harvesting. Apparently it will all come back. However, during the stop for morning tea a pardalote nest was seen just off the side of the road in a low bank and the birds just above anxiously waiting for our departure.

With little to see here it was onward and left into Spring Creek Road to a stop 1.6km from the corner. A short walk to the right of the road led to another regenerating patch with even better flowers than the initial stop including Yam daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*), dwarf greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*), Pink fingers (*Caladenia carnea*), rice flower (*Pimelea* sp.), twining fringe lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*), *Grevillea parviflora*, heath-myrtle (*Micromyrtus ciliata*), and mint bush (*Prostanthera* sp.).

Lunch was enjoyed back at the motel and included a cake and celebration for Helen Burgess's birthday which was that day. The afternoon was out along the Inglewood North Road to the Rose Hill area where there were old mining relics including two mud brick buildings. The first of these had been restored by Collis's son about 20 years ago but unfortunately had been subsequently burnt. However, it still had a roof and was relatively intact. It had two rooms and demon-



strated the cramped conditions under which miners lived. The second was a little more difficult to find and we needed the leadership. It had been bigger but had collapsed and was in fairly poor condition. However, it was impressive still, especially the wall construction technique. This, together with a nearby mine shaft was all that now remained of what was apparently quite a settlement. It was interesting

to see this local history. Living would certainly have been difficult and if we think we have water troubles now, there was no water at Inglewood when it was first settled, the nearest being at Bridgewater.

For Sunday we joined the Friends of Kooyoorra State Park (Melville Caves) group. The group is regularly studying specific areas of the park to observe the effect of drought on which plants were appearing and flowering. The park has four soil types and consequently a wide variety of plants. Travelling along the gravel tracks in the park, the list of flowers grew again. This was certainly a floral bonanza and well worth the visit. The morning was spent along Barry's Rock

Road, travelling a short distance along the Kingower-Rheola Road then returning to the picnic area along Back Road. The highlights were an initial stop along Barry's Rock Road where the flowers formed a visual carpet and a stop along Back Road where a walk included a scramble up granite rocks leading to the rare pink *Zieria*. This plant is one that we would never have found by ourselves. We also saw specimens of Blakely's Redgum and *Prostanthera nivea*, a white flowering mint bush. An impressive carpet of early Nancy, shiny yellow buttercups, blue squills, gnat orchids, pale sun orchids, chocolate lilies, yellow stars, blunt greenhoods, creamy candles, rice flowers (*Pimelia humilis* and the much taller *P. linifolia*) and other spring flowers all added to our enjoyment of this area.

After lunch, some FNCB members visited Melville's Caves and four spent some time at the Glenalbyn block where the Friends were carrying out regular surveying. This block had plants causing identification problems and much time was spent on the ground with books and magnifying glasses. Some plants were New Holland daisy, native flax (*Linum marginale*) a templetonia, ruby saltbush, common everlasting (*Helichrysum papiculatum*) and evidence of many lemon beauty heads (*Calocephalus citreus*) from last season.

The total of forty seven bird species listed during the weekend included many pleasing sightings of birds to be found in the varying habitats of the area. Amongst the nine species of honeyeaters recorded were tawny crowned, black chinned, spiny cheeked and the ubiquitous, showy yellow tufted was widespread. Highlights were sightings of crested bellbird, shy heathwren and a pair of spotted night-jars flushed from amongst low regenerating blue mallee.

Of interest was a lapwing's nest in the motel carpark. We admired three eggs on a roughly formed nest on a grassy patch of stony ground. During the warmth of the day the parents were foraging nearby but as soon as the weather cooled the eggs were protected. This was birdwatching from our motel windows. Behind the property was a dam where we spotted up to six long-necked tortoises.

The weekend at Inglewood was certainly one where we 'fell on our feet' thanks to Greg contacting Collis. The weather on Friday and Saturday was particularly glorious. Sunday was overcast but warm. The accommodation at the Inglewood motel was particularly suitable combining motel and caravan park facilities and having somewhere for meeting as a group in "the shed" which provided comfortable seats, games and a wood-fired heater.

This was a "campout" to an area not familiar to most of us. It was dry, as everywhere is but was interesting, enjoyable and rewarding.

Claire and Peter Dalman with Greg Binns

Attached: Group photo (less Heather and Jason Shields) at Melville Caves. This photo was taken at the same position as a photo of the last camp at this location about 20 years ago.

ANN HIGH COUNTRY 2006

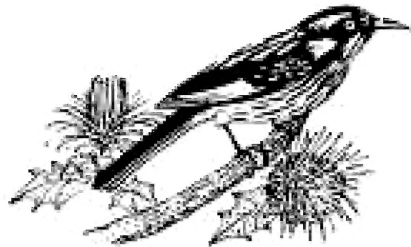
Our guest speaker was unable to attend because of illness so an alternative had to be found at short notice. We used the modern technology to look at photographs taken during the Australian Naturalists Network 2006 Get-together. Rosalind Smallwood of the Geelong Field Naturalist's Club had taken many photographs and prepared a DVD. Rosalind was one of 90 people who attended the ANN Get-together in January 2006. The Get-together spent 10 days in the Victorian High Country visiting Mt Buffalo, Mt Hotham and the Bogong High Plain and then 6 days in the Kosciuszko area of New South Wales.

The DVD showed many of the alpine plants, some animals, mountain scenery and some of the naturalists who attended the Get-together. All, particularly those who have visited the high country recently, enjoyed the photographs.

John Gregurke.

CLARKESDALE AND MT ERIP EXCURSION SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

The morning was spent walking around the bird paddock at the Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary near Linton. Along the road we saw common species including Grey Fantail, Crimson Rosella, Jacky Winter and Yellow Robin. Pardalotes were calling from amongst the leaves. We spotted flowers on Early Nancy *Wurmbea dioica* and Scented Sundew *Drosera whittakeri*.



New Holland Honeyeater

Along the creek, New Holland, White-naped and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters were plentiful. Several species of grevillea and hakea were flowering. These had been closely planted along the creek that was previously covered with gorse. A Red-browed Finch flew past carrying a stem of grass. We were able to locate its large bottle shaped nest roughly made of grass.

The dam contained little water but Black Duck and Eurasian Coot were seen and frogs were calling.

Many wattles were covered in yellow flowers of various hues. We were able to identify Blackwood, Wallowa Wattle, and Ovens Wattle - *Acacia melanoxylon*, *calamifolia* and *pravissima*.

A high flying Great Cormorant and a lone Galah brought the total bird count to 27 species for the morning.

After lunch we headed to Mt Erip. The track into this reserve has deteriorated a great deal since our last visit when we were researching Mt Erip for *Ballarat's Bushland Book*. The ground of this drier area was carpeted with lichen that crunched under foot. Plants in flower included Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis*



Nodding Greenhood
Pterostylis nutans

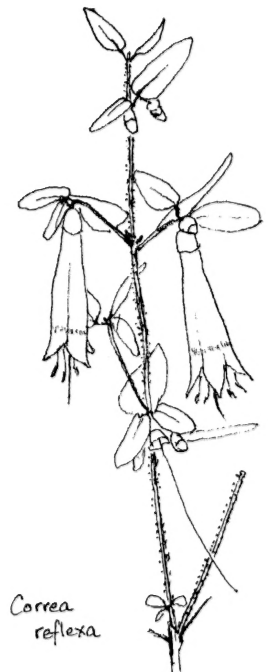
nutans, Gold-dust Wattle *Acacia acinacea* and Golden Wattle *A. pycnantha*. Red Ironbark *Eucalyptus tricarpa* had nearly finished flowering. The other common gum was Red Stringybark *E. macrorhyncha*. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was soaring overhead. When washed out wheels tracks deepened, we headed back to the road and traveled to Happy Valley Crossing.

At Happy Valley Crossing we enjoyed a cuppa and walked along the Woody Yalloak River. Unfortunately some large plants of African Boneseed are growing here. More pleasing were two plants of Common Correa *Correa reflexa*. One plant had a weeping habit and sprawled down a small cliff face. Another interesting plant was Tree Violet *Hymenanthera dentata*, with cream bell-shaped flowers close to the stem. Beneath the River Red Gums we noticed a patch of grass a much darker green than the surrounding grass. Birds had been perching on dead limbs above and their excreta had provided extra nutrients. A pale Little Eagle flew slowly above the trees. On the roadside we noticed an agitated pair of Masked Lapwings. They moved into the adjacent paddock and we saw 3 well developed chicks moving through the grass.

Our last stop of the day was overlooking Devil's Kitchen. We saw the female Peregrine Falcon sitting on the nest on the cliff ledge. The male bird was perched at the top of the cliff above the nest then flew over the valley and landed in a bush. A Magpie on the bush appeared rather nervous.



Eleven people attended the excursion held on Saturday to avoid a clash with Fathers' Day. Should we hold more excursions on Saturdays? Let a committee member know your views.



Correa reflexa

Common Correa
Correa reflexa
Thanks to Helen Burgess

John Gregurke

CANIS LUPIS DINGO

Dingoes belong to the order *Carnivora* as a member of the *Canidae*. There are six others in this order. The *canidae* comprise 54 species and 223 subspecies that are recognised, including wolves, jackals and dogs. Within the species, *Canis Lupis* has 26 sub species that are recognised including the Australian Dingo—*Canis lupis dingo*.

Canis lupis was once world wide and found in Asia, New Guinea, the Islands of S.E.Asia and Australia, a small area in America - the Carolina dog, now extinct, the ancient Kirri from New Zealand also extinct, Madagascar and parts of Africa. Colours of dingoes range from ginger, the most common, white, black and tan and black the least common colour. In the hybrid breeds the above colours are seen with sable, patchy and the very scarce brindle. These give rise to the supposed sightings of the thylacines.

The name dingo is purely Australian, as we know the animal originated in S.E.Asia and came to Australia on fishing vessels as young pups carried for the meat market. They either escaped, were set free or traded with the Aboriginal Koori people where they became semi-domesticated and used for hunting as well as food. The Koori people called them dingo. Most dingoes today are hybrids.

Females reach maturity at 2 years, males 1-3 years. Packs are led by an alpha male and an alpha female. Alpha females come into oestrus first and mate only



with alpha males, although the other females have litters either with the alpha male or other males. Litter sizes vary from one to ten, although usually there are five to seven. Pure bred dingoes are identified by skull measurements. They have a narrower muzzle and longer canine teeth than hybrids.

In Australia the food of dingoes comprises mammals 72.3%, birds 18.8%, reptiles 1.8%, insects 1.3% vegetation 5.5%. Of these, large mammals, and this includes water buffalo, make up 20.3%, medium animals 50% and small animals 29.7%.

These notes are from Dr Laurie Corbett's book *The Dingo in Australia and Asia*.

Lindsay Fink

FNC BALLARAT MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 1 2006

The President welcomed 30 members and visitors.

Correspondence:

IN: (selected)

- Postcard from Ken Hammond in the UK.
- DSE release of draft Framework of Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Victoria - available for public comment; briefing sessions to be held.
- DSE Ballarat District Fire Operations Plan-invitation to provide feedback or comments on fuel reduction burns or prevention and slashing works mentioned in draft now available for public viewing. Map and form provided.

Business Arising from Correspondence:

Ballarat District Fire Operations. Peter Dalman will make comment emphasising the need to consider environmental issues.

Reports

Treasurer's Report:

Opening Balance: \$4373.13 Closing balance:\$4383.68

VCAT Report:

John Gregurke had attended the fifth day of the hearing, from 10am to 2.30pm. John reported that there had been prolonged discussion as to whether a sewer was 'use of the land' John felt his main contribution had been to emphasise the need for conditions to be imposed on the work, in order to protect the habitat. The conditions were

- a. that no work should take place near the creek between November and February, to protect breeding birds
- b. that the cleared area should be protected in some way to prevent it becoming a motor-bike track.

It was suggested that an arborist (from eg City of Ballarat) should be asked to supervise the boring for the pipe, in order to protect trees and roots.

These proposals were challenged by Central Highlands Water.

Any decision will probably take at least two months.

Peter thanked John on behalf of the club for his persistence and perseverance.

General Business

Excursion arrangements .

Visit to Redgums cancelled.

Visit to Brisbane Ranges, including their Flower Show, to take place on Sunday 8th October (instead of Sat 2nd September) Private cars to Brisbane Ranges in the morning, but we need to confirm bus places required for the local trip organised by Friends of the Brisbane Ranges from Anakie Hall.

Syllabus Item: Unfortunately Kate Vlcek was unable to come to give her talk on Bush Foods. However, the club enjoyed a well-documented DVD slide presentation 'High Country' which had been prepared by Rosalind Smallwood.

CALENDAR

October

- Fri 6 Members’ Presentations
- Sun 8 Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show
- Tues 24 Committee Meeting at John and Alison Williams, 20 Stewart St 7:30 pm
- 13—15 SEANA Campout hosted by Maryborough FNC

November

- Fri 3 Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture—Professor Martin Westbrooke, *Von Mueller’s Contribution to the Botany of Victoria*
- Sun 5 am. Bush blocks near Trawalla - Bill Murphy and Chris Chapman
1 pm ‘Belmont’ near Beaufort - Jo Reid

Supper Duty:	October	Volunteers needed!
	November	Volunteers needed!

Committee

- President Mr Peter Dalman
- Vice-President..... Mr Greg Binns
- Secretary Mrs Carol Hall
- Treasurer Mr Les Hanrahan
- Miss Helen Burgess..... Mrs Claire Dalman
- Miss Maureen Christie..... Mr John Williams.....
- Mr John Gregurke Mrs Alison Williams

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Email:

Website: www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au Click on Local Info. Search Environment

Meetings are held at Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: Depart from Ballarat Market Place (formerly Creswick Plaza) Creswick Rd., Ballarat (VicRoads 255 M10) at 9.30am unless otherwise specified.

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